

# Can we enhance the social communication skills of preschool children with Autism Spectrum Conditions through play?

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		<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 11/04/2012	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 06/12/2019	<b>Condition category</b> Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
		<input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Research indicates that children with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASCs) can be taught to play via appropriate intervention, and that this may also improve their social communication skills. However, research in this area is currently lacking. We are interested in exploring whether the social interactions of preschool children with social communication difficulties can be enhanced by developing their play skills.

### Who can participate?

Preschool children attending a Children's Centre preschool in Hampshire can attend. Children do not need to have a diagnosis of an ASC, but do need to have a funded special educational needs place at preschool relating to their social communication difficulties.

### What does the study involve?

After consent is given, a researcher visits the child at their preschool setting to conduct some assessments. Children will then be randomly selected to either receive a short individual play intervention each day for two weeks at preschool, or to continue their preschool as usual for two weeks. The intervention, called Identiplay, lasts for 10 minutes each day and will be delivered by the child's usual key worker. Identiplay teaches play and has been used with many preschool children with social communication needs across Hampshire. After these two weeks the researcher will visit the participant at preschool again and repeat the assessments. After a further six weeks this will be repeated.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of taking part?

You would be helping us to understand the links between play and social communication skills in individuals with ASCs. There are no risks involved in taking part.

### Where is the study run from?

University of Southampton (UK).

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?  
From September 2011 to March 2012.

Who is funding the study?  
University of Southampton (UK).

Who is the main contact?  
Miss Chloe Allen  
cla1g09@soton.ac.uk

## Contact information

**Type(s)**  
Scientific

**Contact name**  
Miss Chloe Allen

**Contact details**  
University of Southampton  
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## Additional identifiers

**EudraCT/CTIS number**

**IRAS number**

**ClinicalTrials.gov number**

**Secondary identifying numbers**  
N/A

## Study information

**Scientific Title**  
Can we enhance the social communication skills of preschool children with Autism Spectrum Conditions through play?

**Study objectives**  
Autism spectrum conditions (ASCs) include autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder (PDD), and Asperger's disorder, and are characterised by deficits in social interaction, communication, and imagination.

**Hypothesis:**  
Exposure to an intervention aiming to enhance play skills will result in a significant increase in play skills, social play development and the frequency of social communication behaviours.

**Ethics approval required**

Old ethics approval format

**Ethics approval(s)**

Department of Psychology Ethics Committee, University of Southampton, 08/08/2011, ref: 704

**Study design**

Multicentre randomised controlled trial

**Primary study design**

Interventional

**Secondary study design**

Randomised controlled trial

**Study setting(s)**

Other

**Study type(s)**

Quality of life

**Participant information sheet**

Not available in web format, please use the contact details below to request a patient information sheet

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Preschool children with Autism Spectrum Conditions

**Interventions**

Children will be matched into pairs and then randomly allocated to either the intervention or treatment as usual condition. The play intervention will take place daily at preschool with the child and their keyworker working one to one. The intervention used is known as Identiplay.

**Intervention Type**

Behavioural

**Primary outcome measure**

1. Preschool teacher-rated SDQ
2. Symbolic Play Test
3. 10-minute video recording of child engaged in free play with peers coded using the M-COSMIC, developmental and social level of play

**Secondary outcome measures**

No secondary outcome measures

**Overall study start date**

01/09/2011

**Completion date**

19/03/2012

# Eligibility

## Key inclusion criteria

1. Attending a special educational needs funded place for children with social communication needs in a children's centre
2. Aged between 2 years 9 months and 5 years
3. Written parental consent

## Participant type(s)

Patient

## Age group

Child

## Lower age limit

2 Years

## Upper age limit

5 Years

## Sex

Both

## Target number of participants

20

## Key exclusion criteria

1. Speech and language delay in the absence of social communication concerns
2. Major medical conditions impacting on the effects of the intervention

## Date of first enrolment

01/09/2011

## Date of final enrolment

19/03/2012

# Locations

## Countries of recruitment

England

United Kingdom

## Study participating centre

**University of Southampton**  
Southampton  
United Kingdom  
SO151BJ

## **Sponsor information**

### **Organisation**

University of Southampton (UK)

### **Sponsor details**

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### **Sponsor type**

University/education

### **Website**

<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/>

### **ROR**

<https://ror.org/01ryk1543>

## **Funder(s)**

### **Funder type**

University/education

### **Funder Name**

University of Southampton (UK)

### **Alternative Name(s)**

University of Southampton UK

### **Funding Body Type**

Government organisation

### **Funding Body Subtype**

Universities (academic only)

**Location**

United Kingdom

## **Results and Publications**

**Publication and dissemination plan**

Not provided at time of registration

**Intention to publish date****Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan****IPD sharing plan summary**

Not provided at time of registration